



PARC NEWSLETTER

FOR ADOPTIVE AND GUARDIANSHIP FAMILIES

Region 5

Volume 17

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You won't want to miss this!

“Understanding Complex Kids and Knowing How to Help Them”

A Free Conference

with Dr. Mark Sloane and Others

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Location: Port Huron, Michigan

Register at www.eventbrite.com/e/understanding-complex-kids-and-knowing-how-to-help-them-registration-26821797719 or call 734-528-1720 x23272.

Join us for an informative training hosted by PARC! The keynote speaker, Dr. Mark Sloane, is a board certified pediatrician with specialized advanced fellowship training in adolescent behavioral medicine. He has more than 30 years clinical pediatric experience, and is owner and medical director of the Center for Behavioral Pediatrics in Kalamazoo. Dr. Sloane is considered an expert in the diagnosis and treatment of learning, attention and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents. He is a founding member of the Children's Trauma Assessment Center's (CTAC) transdisciplinary team and has clinical experience in the medication management of more than 1,200 traumatized, drug and alcohol-exposed children and adolescents assessed at the center. CTAC has provided comprehensive neurodevelopmental trauma assessments for more than 3,300 children who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences. Trauma occurs when there is an overwhelming event or events that render a child helpless, powerless, or creates a threat of harm or loss to the child or to someone critically important to the child. Examples include physical, sexual or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, exposure to domestic violence, inconsistent caregiving due to parental substance abuse or mental illness, community violence or multiple moves within the foster care system.

In addition to Dr. Sloane, there will be several adoptive parents/professionals presenting their findings and how to best parent our complex kids. Join us to learn more about trauma, drug and alcohol exposure, resources, and useful strategies to parent children with adverse childhood experiences.



Special Back to School Edition!

We've included extra articles, training opportunities, information, and tips to help your kids transition back to school and become champions!



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FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER TRAINING

With Adrienne Bashista

On June 24 and 25, parents and professionals had the opportunity to attend a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) workshop sponsored by Judson Center's Post Adoption Resource Center to learn more about parenting children with FASD. Providing first-hand experience and research, Adrienne Bashista, led this free two-day training. She is a writer, special needs parent advocate, FASD educator/parent coach and the co-founder of FAFASD (Families Affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) in Massachusetts. Her youngest son was diagnosed with FASD in 2011, after six years of searching for answers.



Attendees of the workshop gained an understanding of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and differences related to prenatal exposure. They learned about the changes that affect the brain and how these differences manifest behaviorally in an FASD child. Those who attended the training also discovered what we know about what works and does not work regarding parenting, caring for and working with individuals who experienced prenatal trauma due to alcohol and drug exposure. Strength-based strategies for helping family members and clients who were exposed to alcohol and other drugs prenatally were introduced to assist families in raising an FASD child.

Future FASD Training Opportunities with Adrienne Bashista

If you would like the opportunity to learn about FASD yourself, Adrienne Bashista offers a variety of workshops and trainings focusing on FASD as a neurobehavioral disorder.

She is hosting upcoming webinars in August and September. The webinar will run from 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday evenings on Aug. 15, 22, 29, Sept. 12, 19. Please note that Sept. 5, Labor Day, there will be no class. The cost is \$55 and a certificate of completion will be issued after the webinar is complete.

If you have any questions, email Adrienne at adrienne@fafasd.org.

Additional FASD information and support available through the internet:

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
www.nofas.org

National Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:
<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Being a family means you will love and be loved for the rest of your life.



Helping Our Kids Become Champions

Practical Advice and Highlights from our May Conference at Eastern Michigan University

Back in May, PARC joined families at Eastern Michigan University for a training about what it means to become a champion and ways to support our kids on their journeys. Youth had the opportunity to go on a tour of campus, hear first-hand information on the college experience and planning for the future, and they got EMU swag bags to take home!

The guest speaker, Cole Williams, told his inspiring story of self-transformation during his journey into adoptive and foster fatherhood. Rachel Mooney, BSW social worker with PARC and an alumni of foster care and an adult adoptee, shared her past experiences to help adoptive families and their children learn to build bonds that won't break.

Rachel Mooney, PARC worker, shares the meaning behind the acronym "CHAMPS" that she uses to empower children to reach their fullest potential:

Care about and respect their past. A child's past impacts their life every day. Even if they do not remember much, it still plays a huge role in who they are and how they react to all situations. When your child is behaving in a seemingly inappropriate way for someone their age, remember trauma delays development and often these delays are not physical but emotional. Learn the developmental age of your child, separate from the chronological age, and care for them as they need based on that.

Hope for a better future. I often hear parents fall into a trap of the limitations they believe their child will have due to their trauma history and the natural ways their child copes. But allow yourself to feel hope because your hope can give your children hope. Help your child set attainable goals for the future. Your child may want to be a doctor and you just do not think they will ever be able to achieve that. Encourage them in this dream! Have them join science camps or shadow someone who is a doctor. Let them learn on their own that they do not want to follow a certain path. Also, hope that the work you're doing will not be fruitless. The behavior problems, the defiance and the disrespect will mellow out as they get through their teenage years. Accounting for their developmental age, the teenage years could last well into their twenties.

Affirm your child. Children in the preteen/teen years have so much going on with them. Developmentally they are transitioning from a family-based influence period to a peer-based influence period. This causes incredible identity issues. Who am I and where do I fit in? For an adopted child this period is even more confusing. Am I going to turn out like my biological family or like my adoptive family? Affirming who your child is as an individual can help them with those identity pieces. A defiant child can be seen as defiant or as a strong leader. You could rephrase that negative trait into a positive one by saying you know what you want and you are not afraid to fight for it. Let's work out a way you can fight for what you want more respectfully. Do research with them to help set attainable career goals and help them see what it takes to get there.

Marvel at your children. If you just found out your kid was doing drugs or sending inappropriate pictures to school mates, this may seem next to impossible. Marvel at where your child has come from and the incredible adversity they have overcome. Wonder at their strength. They are survivors and these behaviors are common among teens. Keep a journal of what they have overcome to read during these moments so you can remind yourself of how far they have already come.

Persevere always! It should never be an option to give up on our children for any reason. The type of relationship that you have may have to change in extreme circumstances for safety reasons but never abandon them. They are hurt and trying to learn to cope with scars that are deep. The very last thing they need is to be rejected again by someone who said they cared. Be their Forever Family like you promised. There may be periods that seem hopeless and like you can do nothing to help them, but in these moments hang on to the fact that just by being there unconditionally you are helping them become stronger and more stable.

Savor the moments! The moments when a child who hates to be touched wants a hug or your child calls you mom for the first time. Hang onto these moments, relish them because one day your kids will be grown and moved away. Use these moments to push past the times you feel you just cannot break through: You have already!



Back to School Tips

By Jonathan Albert, PARC Program Supervisor

I know, I know, it seems like summer has barely begun and we are already writing about making preparations for going back to school. But, I have found that the more I can schedule and prepare things in advance, the better outcome I have in a variety of events that life has to offer. I believe this takes on an added importance when children are involved and, even greater still, with those that have experienced any significant trauma or loss. So with that in mind, please allow me to share some strategies that I have found help transition kids from summer back to school.



Sleeping in and staying up late is a summer routine for many kids. To help transition kids to an early morning rise, start to change a child's wake and sleep times a few days or even a week before school starts. A tip some parents have learned is to plan an exciting activity with your children that requires them to wake up early. This will then trigger the kids to be ready for bed at an earlier time and so the routine begins to change in a less stressful way.

Schedule every appointment you can well in advance so that your child does not have to miss a school day. The easiest time to schedule a child's next dental or medical appointment is while you are at the office. I have been getting better at this and because I scheduled a year in advance, I have my four kids next dental visits in August, the first appointment of the day, with two of them getting cleanings at the same time. This saves time and gets them up early. There are much fewer scheduling conflicts when I schedule things way in advance.

Shopping is one of the few things I wait to schedule as close to the start of school as I safely can. Styles change and clothing costs enough without paying for something that is no longer "cool" and your child refuses to wear. And, most stores will have school supplies at their cheapest right before school starts. Just make sure you reserve enough time in your schedule to get it all done.

If your child is going to participate in an athletic endeavor, they will need a sports physical. Your student will not be allowed to play or even practice without one and this will get him behind the other students right away. Many schools will schedule a day in which a health professional will come to the school and give low cost or even no cost sports physicals. If that is not available, your family doctor can give a physical and many have the forms ready in the office. If not, you can stop the school and get one or even print them out on line. Most insurances will pay for one physical per calendar year but be sure to check with your insurance provider to make sure your visit is covered. If you are unable to get a physical for your student through one of the first two options, most after-hours clinics do offer sports physicals, but they do charge for them because most insurance providers will not pay for them at these clinics.

Continued on the next page...

PARC is open to suggestions.

Is there a specific topic you would like more training on?

Would you like to start a support group in your area?

Is there a fun activity you think adoptive/guardian families would like to do together?

**Give us a call. We'd love to hear your ideas.
734-794-2988**

Back to School Tips Continued

By Jonathan Albert, PARC Program Supervisor

Visiting your child's schools is an excellent idea, especially if the child is transitioning to a new building or campus such as from junior high to high school. Many schools have an orientation day prior to the first day of school which you do not want to miss if possible. But, if you need to, schools are usually very accommodating to parents that call to schedule a different time to orient themselves with the school. This is a great opportunity to begin building relationships with school staff and getting the framework started for any child that needs an Individualized Education Plan or other educational supports. Decide in advance how your child is going to get to and from school. Are they close enough to walk? What about on cold and/or rainy days? Can you carpool with neighbors? Some children are nervous to any change in their schedule and preparing them for this change can often help. For younger children, and those that experience anxiety for any reason, a "safe" word should be established in case the child is to be picked up by anyone other than a parent.

What extra-curricular activities might your student be in this year? Cheerleading? Future Farmers of America? Basketball? Most schools have a variety of sports and

activities that will help stimulate your child and teach discipline. Don't wait until school starts to buy equipment or any other needs for your child.



Schedule it before school starts so sizes are available and you have more time. For children who are picked up after school, what should the child do if you are not there on time? What if you are five minutes late? Thirty minutes late? Two hours late? If the child rides the bus, what should the child do if you are not there as expected? Life happens, flat tires, late meeting or even an accident. Make sure your children know what to do, and/or who to call just in case. Update any emergency information with the school and prepare a neighbor or friend to pick up and/or take care of your children till you can get there.

Be positive and supportive of the school your child attends. It can really get your kids into a good mindset to begin the year on a positive note. You can never be totally prepared for everything, but by doing the best we can, it will help our kids to get the best start they can. Have a great year!



PARTNERING WITH TEACHERS:

Be sure to engage your child's teachers to be able to teach your child in a manner that is beneficial to them. What are your child's strengths and challenges? Do they do better sitting in the front or the back of the classroom? Are they triggered by things that could be avoided? Do they have any diagnosis like Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder that the teachers should be aware of? Be sure to provide a positive image of your child who will thrive with the right supports in place!





Region 5 Meetings and Support Groups

Build connections with and get support from others who truly understand!

In addition to adult meetings, PARC youth groups for older children and childcare for younger ones are available at most meetings! Please RVSP to Rachel_Kornilakis@judsoncenter.org.

Ann Arbor Lunch at the PARC

Meets from 12:00-1:00 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month. Bring a brown bag lunch; we'll provide drinks! Location: 3840 Packard Ave, Suite 170, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

Fabulous Foster and Adoption Group

Meets from 6:00-8:00 p.m. the first Monday of each month and starts with a potluck; please bring a dish to pass if you are able. Nominal fee for childcare. Location: Arbor Bridge Church, 2500 S. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

In September, there will be a 30 minute lesson on trauma breathing from yoga instructor and life coach Joyce Brown.

Jackson Family Connections Meeting

Meets from 6:00-8:00 p.m. the third Thursday of each month and starts with a potluck dinner; please bring a dish to pass if you are able. Location: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1505 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson, 49202.

Free One Day Conference - "Understanding Complex Kids and Knowing How to Help Them"

SEPTEMBER 24, 9am-5pm at St. Clair County Administration Building 200 Grand River Ave. Port Huron, MI 48060. This conference is for parents and professionals who want to learn more about parenting children who have complex histories, experienced trauma or possible prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol. **Space is Limited.** Register early with Event Brite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/understanding-complex-kids-and-knowing-how-to-help-them-registration-26821797719>

Kalamazoo County Support Group

Meets from 6:30-8:30 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month. This group is offered by the Adoptive Family Support Network. (AFSN contact sgarcia@afsn.org). Location: St. Ambrose Church, 1628 E. G Ave., Parchment, 49004.

For a complete list of events, visit the calendar page on our website www.parc-judson.org/calendar.

Got to Catch Them All!



Pokémon Go is a huge hit with kids of all ages and adults too. Sharing this activity can be a great way to bond with your kids. Read up on the game and get some important safety tips to discuss with your kids in this Metro Parent article.

http://www.metroparent.com/daily/parenting/parenting-issues-tips/pokemon-go-safety-tips-for-kids-teens/?mqsc=E3842357&utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&utm_medium=metroparent_fullMP%20Daily&utm_campaign=071316_Wednesday

Contact Us

Please feel welcome to contact the PARC office in your region, visit our website for information, or connect with us via social media!

Region 5 Office
3840 Packard Rd.
Ste. 170
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734-794-2988

Region 6 Office
2503 S. Linden Rd.
Ste. 130
Flint, MI 48532
810-732-8510

Website: <http://www.parc-judson.org>



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